



A Sufi Tract

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A Sufi Tract

By A. J. ARBERRY

AHLWARDT describes in his Berlin catalogue a Ṣūfī tract entitled by him *kitāb al-asfār*, which he attributes to the well-known Quṭb al-Dīn al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428).¹ Vollers, who found a second copy of the same work at Leipzig, but there entitled (as it proves, more correctly) *al-isfār 'an natā'ij al-asfār*, follows Ahlwardt's lead in naming al-Jīlī as the author.² These facts have naturally resulted in Brockelmann including the book in the list of al-Jīlī's writings.³

Now Ahlwardt also describes in the immediately preceding entry another tract called by him *al-safar al-qarīb natījat al-safar al-gharīb*, which he assigns likewise to al-Jīlī.⁴ The Berlin copy of this second treatise appeared to be unique, until another exemplar came to light among the manuscripts bequeathed by the late Professor R. A. Nicholson to Cambridge University Library (MS. Or. 1551, foll. 65-9): this second copy, which bears no indication of authorship, gives the variant but seemingly more authentic title *al-isfār al-gharīb natījat al-safar al-qarīb*. In the exordium to this work the author mentions that he was inspired to write it, having read *al-isfār 'an natā'ij al-asfār*, by the celebrated Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240). Ahlwardt noticed this reference, which makes it all the more extraordinary that he should have attributed both works to the same author.

Several other copies of *al-isfār 'an natā'ij al-asfār* have been recorded, all of them correctly assigned to Ibn 'Arabi.⁵ The tract, which is of considerable interest and originality, has now (1949) been published in Hyderabad. The purpose of this note is to correct the confusion still standing in the catalogues.

¹ *Verzeichniss*, no. 3279. ² *Katalog*, no. 251. ³ *GAL* ii 206, Suppl. ii 284.

⁴ *Verzeichniss*, no. 3278.

⁵ Brockelmann, *Suppl.* i, 800 (152).
